

BDCP Coordination Meeting September 14, 2010 minutes by Michael Nepstad

The BDCP Coordination meeting is for the five Federal agencies to share information, and is chaired by David Nawi, a DOI senior advisor to the secretary of interior. These meetings are weekly (Tuesdays 9am).

Attendees:

David Nawi – DOI
Patti Idlof – Reclamation
Federico Barajas – Reclamation
Dan Castleberry – USFWS
Michael Tucker - NMFS
Michael Nepstad – USACE (by Phone)
Jim Monroe – DOI (by Phone)
Kaylee Allen – DOI (by Phone)
And a couple others whose names I wasn't able to catch

Summary of Meeting

1. Congressman Miller (7th) and Garamendi (10th) will be writing soon to DOI to protest the closed door (no public) principals meetings which are planned for last half of September and in general that the decision making for the BDCP is a closed door process.
2. There is now an “oversight committee” whose apparent function is to oversee the analysis of the long-term effects which is being developed over the next 30-60 days. The members of this committee are: Ann Haden (environmental rep), Cambell Ingram (environmental rep), Dan Castleberry (USFWS), Federico Barajas (Reclamation), Michael Tucker (NMFS), Laura King Moon (State Water Contractors), Jerry Johns (DWR), Carl (didn't catch last name but probably the DFG representative), and one other person whose name I didn't catch (probably a representative of the Westlands Water District). Originally there was a proposal for Michael Chotowski of Reclamation and Michael Hoover of USFWS to be on the committee, but this was blocked by a walkout staged by Laura King Moon. Presumption by Nawi is that the water contractors don't want the two Michaels on the committee because they don't like their answers.
3. The Lead Federal Agencies position is that they have agreed to nothing other than to say that it's OK for things to be analyzed. They said they have not agreed to any amount, type, or location of habitat restoration, they have not agreed for any level of export pumping, and they have not agreed to any type of project operations. Rather, they believe all they have agreed to is a set of parameters for analysis, and then based on that analysis they will decide what is acceptable and what is not. Jim Monroe explained that to be square with FACA we federals at the steering committee are only there to provide guidance to the SWC and DWR, in an ex-officio capacity, on their proposed action so that they do not end up proposing things which are clearly not going to be able to get permits. No-one challenged Jim on this statement, even though it is inconsistent with the last several month discussions that the BDCP is a Federal process and the HCP and EIS are Federal documents.

4. Lead feds still debating who will be in the final governing structure, i.e., the Feds don't think state and federal water contractors should be in the governance of the HCP, while the contractors think they should be in it.
5. All are still debating what the covered actions are going to be in the HCP.
6. Lead Feds are totally dissatisfied with the long term effects analysis prepared by SAIC (the contractor employed by the SWC) and don't want them to start working on the short term effects analysis until they get SAIC to agree to do it the way they would like it done.
7. The State and federal contractors do not want any further reductions of water exports below present levels at any time under the new HCP. Lead Feds feel that in the first 10-20 years of the HCP (i.e., before the new diversions are constructed in the north delta), the only way to do more than merely avoid jeopardy may be to reduce/restrict exports more than they are currently. This is a huge issue, because if the new intakes never get built the water contractors would be worse off than they are now. This is still an area of debate between the BDCP principals; with the lead Feds agreeing that the short term analysis should look at more restrictive water export operations.
8. Corps permitting (10, 404, and 408) and levees will be topics of discussion at principals meetings in remainder of this month.
9. No mention was made as to whether or not the draft BDCP HCP would be released for review on September 24th as previously scheduled.